

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of increasing cardiac contractile function in a subject comprising altering the expression of sorcin in the heart.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the alteration of expression comprises administration of a viral vector encoding sorcin to the subject, wherein the sorcin is expressed and increases contractile function.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the vector is an adenoviral vector.
4. The method of claim 2, wherein the sorcin is overexpressed.
5. The method of claim 2, wherein the vector is administered directly into the heart.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the heart is normal.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein the heart has decreased contractile function.
8. The method of claim 6, wherein the subject has diabetes mellitus.
9. A method of treating or preventing heart failure, comprising administration of an adenoviral vector encoding sorcin to a subject, wherein the sorcin is expressed.
10. The method of claim 9, wherein the sorcin is overexpressed.
11. The method of claim 9, wherein the vector is administered directly into the heart of the subject.
12. The method of claim 1, wherein the alteration of expression comprises administration of an agent that modulates sorcin expression.
13. The method of claim 12, wherein the agent stimulates sorcin overexpression.
14. The method of claim 12, wherein the agent is administered in a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

15. A method of identifying an agent that modulates sorcin expression, comprising:
a) contacting a sample comprising sorcin with a test agent under conditions sufficient for sorcin expression; and
b) detecting a change in sorcin expression in the presence of the test agent as compared to the sorcin expression in the absence of the test agent;
wherein a change in sorcin expression identifies the test agent as an agent that modulates sorcin expression.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the sample comprises a cell sample.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the cell sample is obtained from a subject.

18. The method of claim 15, wherein the sample comprises a cell free sample.

19. The method of claim 15, wherein the agent stimulates sorcin overexpression.

20. The method of claim 15, which is performed in a high throughput format.

21. A method of identifying an agent that modulates cardiac contractile function, comprising measuring the maximum speed of contraction and the maximum speed of relaxation in a heart administered the agent, wherein an increase in maximum speed is indicative of an agent that modulates cardiac contractile function.

22. A method of diagnosing a cardiac contractile function associated disorder in a subject, comprising comparing the sorcin expression in a test sample from the subject with the sorcin expression in a corresponding normal sample, wherein a difference in sorcin expression in the test sample as compared to the sorcin expression in the normal sample is diagnostic of a cardiac contractile function associated disorder in the subject.

23. The method of claim 22, which is performed in a high throughput format.

24. A method of treating or preventing heart failure, comprising administering an agent identified by the method of claim 15 to a subject.

25. A method of treating or preventing heart failure, comprising administering an agent identified by the method of claim 21 to a subject.

26. The method of claim 24, wherein the subject has diabetes mellitus.

27. A method for monitoring a therapeutic regimen for treating a subject having heart failure, comprising determining a change in sorcin expression during therapy.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein the therapy comprises the treatment of claim 9.

29. The method of claim 27, wherein the therapy comprises the treatment of claim 12.